



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**September 24, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.
Committee Room 2, City Hall**

Minutes

(Due to precautionary health measures, only City staff are permitted to personally attend meetings)

PRESENT (In Person):

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff and Consultants

Anur Mehdic, Chair/Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst

John Stark, Supervisory, Community Planning

Karen Campbell, Policy Planner

Alison Ching, Recreation Leader

Organizational Representatives

Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor

Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience

Erin Daly, Fraser Health Authority

Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice

Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

Task Force members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Draft Minutes

No comments were received.

3. Update on Actions Taken Since Meeting of August 27, 2020

Friendly Caller Program

Update to be provided via email.

Grocery, Meal, and Food Programs

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, provided the following updates:

- The Greater Vancouver Food Bank Program continues to operate at Olivet Baptist Church; however, the City is investigating indoor space options for the Program as inclement weather draws near; and,
- The City continues looking at longer term sustainable funding options as it is anticipated that the need for food programs will continue longer than the six to 9 month timeframe for funding received from the Vancouver Foundation, etc.

Task Force Web Portal

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that staff continue to update the Web Portal which includes key documents such as the Food Resources Calendar, the Survival Resources Guide, Key Information and Resources for Tenants, the List of Financial Resources, etc.

Financial Programs

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, invited members to visit the List of Financial Resources on the Task Force Web Portal as a substantial number of updates was recently made to the List including the conclusion of the CERB.

Key Information and Resources for Tenants

Karen Campbell, Policy Planner, informed members of the following:

- Tenants can now be evicted for rent owed outside of the pandemic emergency period, and that most first installments to pay overdue rent will come due on October 1, 2020. Tenants may be evicted if this first payment is missed;
- Rental increases in 2021 cannot exceed 1.4 percent; and,
- The Federal Government has introduced the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB), and the Canada Recover Caregiving Benefit (CRCB).

4. Extreme Heat Cooling Centre Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, noted that this summer brought only a few days of extreme heat, and acknowledged that the physical distancing requirements of COVID-19 has made this a very challenging time with respect to providing places of respite to those trying to escape the heat. He shared that next year, the City will also be taking poor air quality from wildfire smoke into consideration and he will be contacting Assistant Fire Deputy Rob Dick to request that the Extreme Heat Plan be amended to include poor air quality.

5. Identification of Other Issues, Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and Member Updates

- In response to a member's enquiry, John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, shared that Douglas College has a digital initiative focused on providing technology to the at-risk, street entrenched population in effort to supply them with devices to access information and resources. The initiative also includes the creation of Wi-Fi hotspots in the community. Staff will investigate if this initiative can more actively address seniors, possibly providing free Wi-Fi in seniors residential buildings. Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, will follow up with the City's IT Department on expanding Wi-Fi hotspots to make them more accessible to seniors, as well as share a map of hotspots located throughout the City including those located inside, such as at the library;
- The City will re-visit advertising the Task Force Web Portal to ensure that residents are aware of resources available to them and to see the work that the City's COVID-19 Task Forces have undertaken as it has been noted that, although these were promoted near the beginning of the pandemic, many residents are unaware of them. The Second Wave Committee will be apprised of the situation and asked to share information via Citipage, the New Westminster Record, and various social media avenues, as well as possibly creating a brochure and poster for dissemination; and,
- Mr. Stark advised that staff can further investigate ways of providing assistance to seniors over the winter with respect to things such as sidewalk snow clearing, dog walking, taking pets to veterinary appointments, etc. He noted that this has been an ongoing discussion and a snow angel program, such as what the City of Vancouver offers, was looked into; however, the liability made it prohibitive.

Member Updates

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, reminded members of the CAN Training Program, an initiative of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, in partnership with the City which will provide opportunities to those with lived and living experience in poverty in effort to increase their involvement in advocacy, policy development, City

committee structure, etc. It was noted that the 6-7 training sessions will commence on Friday, October 9, 2020, and it is hoped that graduates of the Program will become part of the City's advisory committees and assist City staff in engagement. Mr. Stark noted that a report will be going to Council with respect to providing graduates who participate in City committees, etc., compensation such as child care, transit passes, etc. to ensure that programs, services, and facility design represents everyone in the community.

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, urged members who may know of someone interested in participating to see the Program's contact information which is included in the meeting follow up emails.

6. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, thanked everyone for their time and reminded members that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Anur Mehdic
Chair

Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk